

Why you should start work at 10am

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

How many hours' sleep do you think you need?

Do you get enough sleep?

What would be the ideal time for you to start school or work?

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

diabetes
deprived

obesity
impaired

adolescent
ingrained

hypothalamus
apprentice

intern
stagger

- If you are _____ of something, you do not have it or you do not have enough of it.
- If you _____ working hours, you arrange for them to start at different times.
- _____ is a serious medical condition in which your body does not produce enough insulin to reduce the amount of sugar in the blood.
- _____ is a condition in which someone is too fat in a way that is bad for their health.
- If your body's ability to do something is _____, you are not fully able to do it.
- An _____ is a boy or girl who is changing into a young man or woman.
- The _____ is the part of the brain responsible for many of the body's essential hormones.
- If an attitude, belief or habit is _____, it has existed for a long time and cannot easily be changed.
- An _____ is a student who works in a job in order to gain experience, usually for low or no pay.
- An _____ is someone who works for a particular company, usually for low wages, in order to learn the type of work they do or acquire a particular skill.

3 What do you know?

Decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Then, check your answers in the text.

- When children are ten years old, their biological wake-up time is around 6.30am.
- A 16-year-old's biological wake-up time is 9am.
- An 18-year-old has a natural waking time of 10am.
- A 10-year-old and a 55-year-old wake and sleep naturally at the same time.
- Young people aged between 14 and 24 lose more than two hours' sleep per night.
- People aged between 24 and 30 lose more than three hours' sleep per night.

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Why you should start work at 10am (unless you're in your 50s)

We shouldn't make everyone come in at 9am just because it suits the boss's sleeping patterns. It's time to stagger starting times and let 30-somethings come in later, says one leading sleep scientist

Emine Saner

9 September, 2015

- 1 Lots of us know we are sleep-deprived but imagine if we could fix it with a fairly simple solution: getting up later. In a speech at the British Science Festival, Dr Paul Kelley, clinical research associate at the Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute at Oxford University, called for schools to stagger their starting times to work with the natural biological rhythms of their students. It would improve cognitive performance, exam results and students' health (sleep deprivation has been linked with diabetes, depression, obesity and an impaired immune system).
- 2 It follows a paper, published in 2014, in which he noted that, when children are around ten, their biological wake-up time is about 6.30am; at 16, this rises to 8am; and, at 18, someone you may think of as a lazy teenager actually has a natural waking hour of 9am. The conventional school starting time works for 10-year-olds but not 16- to 18-year-olds. For the older teenagers, it might be more sensible to start the school day at 11am or even later. "A 7am alarm call for older adolescents," Kelley and his colleagues pointed out in the paper, "is the equivalent of a 4.30am start for a teacher in their 50s."
- 3 He says it's not as simple as persuading teenagers to go to bed earlier. "The body's natural rhythm is controlled by a particular kind of light," says Kelley. "The eye doesn't just contain rods and cones; it contains cells that then report to the suprachiasmatic nuclei in the hypothalamus." This part of the brain controls our circadian rhythms over a 24-hour cycle. "It's the light that controls it. It's like saying: 'Why can't you control your heartbeat?'"
- 4 But it isn't just students who would benefit from a later start. Kelley says the working day should be more forgiving of our natural rhythms. Describing the average sleep loss per night for different age groups, he says: "Between 14 and 24, it's more

than two hours. For people aged between 24 and about 30 or 35, it's about an hour and a half. That can continue up until you're about 55 when it's in balance again. The 10-year-old and 55-year-old wake and sleep naturally at the same time."

- 5 This might be why, he adds, the traditional nine to five is so ingrained; it is maintained by bosses, many of them in their mid-50s and upwards because "it is best for them". So, should workplaces have staggered starting times, too? Should those in their 50s and above come in at 8am, while those in their 30s start at 10am and the teenage intern or apprentice be encouraged to turn up at 11am? Kelley says that synchronized hours could have "many positive consequences. The positive side of this is people's performance, mood and health will improve. It's very uplifting in a way because it's a solution that will make people less ill, and happier and better at what they do."
- 6 There would probably be fewer accidents as drivers would be more alert, he says. It could spell the end of rush hour as people stagger their work and school-run times. A later start to the day for many, says Kelley, "is something that would benefit everyone, particularly families. Parents go and try to wake up teenagers who are waking up three hours too early. It creates tensions for everybody."
- 7 So, what time does Kelley start work? "I am 67 so that means I'm back to being ten years old and I get up just after six. I wake naturally." And, yes, he says he finds the start of his working day much easier now than he did when he was younger.

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4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. What could help to solve the problem of sleep deprivation in young people?
 - a. going to bed earlier
 - b. getting up later
 - c. sleeping more than ten hours a night
2. What controls the body's natural rhythm?
 - a. the sleep cycle
 - b. a particular kind of light
 - c. the hypothalamus
3. When is the body's natural rhythm back in balance again?
 - a. when you are 55
 - b. when you are 35
 - c. when you are 67
4. Why do bosses maintain the traditional nine to five?
 - a. because research shows that this is best for most people
 - b. because they believe this will make people less ill
 - c. because many are in their mid-50s and these working hours are best for them

5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. an adjective meaning *related to recognizing and understanding things* (para 1)
2. a two-word noun phrase meaning *the process in your body that protects you against diseases* (para 1)
3. an adjective meaning *of the usual, traditional or accepted type* (para 2)
4. an adjective meaning *relating to a period of 24 hours and especially to the changes in people's bodies that happen during this period* (para 3)
5. an adjective meaning *making you feel happier or more hopeful* (para 5)
6. an adjective meaning *able to think in a clear and intelligent way* (para 6)
7. a two-word noun phrase meaning *the time of day when there are most cars on the road because people are travelling to and from work* (para 6)
8. a two-word noun phrase meaning *the journey by car to school each morning and back each afternoon* (para 6)

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6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 1. create | a. performance |
| 2. lose | b. positive consequences |
| 3. stagger | c. tension |
| 4. improve | d. a paper |
| 5. publish | e. sleep |
| 6. have | f. starting times |

7 Word-building

Fill the gaps in the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

- Sleep _____ has been linked to several medical conditions. [DEPRIVE]
- It's not as simple as _____ teenagers to go to bed earlier. [PERSUADE]
- The working day should be more _____ of our natural rhythms. [FORGIVE]
- The _____ nine to five is ingrained. [TRADITION]
- Starting times should be staggered to work with the _____ rhythms of school students. [BIOLOGY]
- The _____ school starting time works for 10-year-olds. [CONVENTION]

8 Discussion

Discuss these statements.

- It's nonsense to suggest that schools should have different starting times for different age groups.
- Most young people are alert in the morning and tired in the afternoon.
- All working people should have flexible hours. As long as they work the contracted number of hours per week, it doesn't matter when they start or finish work.

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KEY

2 Key words

1. deprived
2. stagger
3. diabetes
4. obesity
5. impaired
6. adolescent
7. hypothalamus
8. ingrained
9. intern
10. apprentice

3 What do you know?

1. T
2. F
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. F

4 Comprehension check

1. b
2. b
3. a
4. c

5 Find the word

1. cognitive
2. immune system
3. conventional
4. circadian
5. uplifting
6. alert
7. rush hour
8. school run

6 Verb + noun collocations

1. c
2. e
3. f
4. a
5. d
6. b

7 Word-building

1. deprivation
2. persuading
3. forgiving
4. traditional
5. biological
6. conventional